

News Release

U of M Crookston Horticulture Club Hosts Students from Six Midwest Universities for the Mid-America Collegiate Horticultural Society 39th Annual Conference

By Itollefs on Wednesday, November 2, 2011

The University of Minnesota, Crookston Horticulture Club hosted the Mid-America Collegiate Horticultural Society (MACHS) 39th annual conference from Thursday, October 20 to Sunday, October 23, 2011. The theme was "Little Campus on the Prairie." This was the first time the U of M, Crookston Horticulture Club hosted the event. There were 33 students and 3 advisors from 6 universities in attendance including: Iowa State University, North Dakota State University, Northwest Missouri State University, South Dakota State University, the University of Wisconsin- River Falls, and Western Illinois University.



Thursday evening students gathered in the U of M, Crookston greenhouse classroom for registration, refreshments, and a campus welcome by Ron DeVecchio, U of M, Crookston professor and head of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Department. Friday morning began with the general knowledge exam, plant identification, and plant judging. Each school had a team of 4 students whose individual scores contribute to the team total. This contest was designed to challenge the horticulture students and allow them to see where they stand in relation to other universities.

Friday afternoon included three guest speakers. Linda Kingery of the Northwest Regional and Sustainable Development Partnership talked to the students about the dynamic local foods in this region. Kathleen Brokke, historian and horticulturalist, performed her interpretation of Fannie Manhood Heath, a pioneer horticulturalist in the region. Minnesota Nursery and Landscaping Association President Bert Swanson shared his industry perspective with the up and coming industry leaders. Also taking place Friday afternoon was the planting of an apple tree in the U of M, Crookston Nature Nook to honor Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai. Friday evening included a banquet meal with keynote speaker Rusty Schmidt, natural resource specialist with the Washing Conservation District. Schmidt is one of three authors of the *Blue Thumb Guide to Raingardens* which has changed the way people think about using water in the Twin Cities area and beyond.



Saturday was a day of regional tours highlighting the diversity of Minnesota. Students began the day with naturalist Rhett Johnson leading the group through the Agassiz Dunes Scientific and Natural Area in Fertile, Minn. Traveling south to Detroit Lakes, Minn., the group saw the poinsettia growing operation of Bergen's Greenhouse, Inc. In Park Rapids, Minn., students visited the wholesale perennial growing operation of Bergen's Nursery. The final stop for the group was Itasca State Park where they took a tour of Minnesota's conifers. All of the students had an opportunity to cross the headwaters of the Mississippi River which was a first-time experience for many students.

Sunday marked the end of the weekend conference as the MACHS students held their annual business meeting, elected the 2011-2012 officer team, and selected a host school for 2013. Awards from Friday's team contest were presented. The top overall individual was Winston Beck from Iowa State University. The first place team was South Dakota State University. Iowa State University was the second place team with the team from Northwest Missouri State University placing third. The U of M, Crookston observed the MACHS tradition that the host school is allowed to compete but not receive awards.

The entire event was planned by the U of M, Crookston Horticulture Club students with support from U of M, Crookston staff and faculty. U of M, Crookston senior Kristine Neu served as the chair of MACHS 2011. The MACHS annual conference is the largest undertaking in the history of the Horticulture Club, and they were excited to showcase their program, the campus, and the community to the visiting universities. The host school for the 2012 MACHS conference will be South Dakota State University chaired by Sarah Custer. The host school for the 2013 MACHS conference will be the University of Wisconsin- River Falls chaired by Joel Sehloff. For more information about MACHS and to see more event photos visit the group's Facebook page: Mid America Collegiate Horticulture Society 2011.



MACHS is comprised of horticulture clubs from universities and two-year colleges in the Midwest Region including Colorado, Kansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. MACHS is a branch of the Association of Collegiate Branches (ACB) within the American Society for Horticultural Sciences (ASHS). ACB is a national forum comprised of undergraduate horticulture clubs within ASHS.

The objective of MACHS is to promote an awareness of the profession of horticulture, furnish a medium of communication for horticulture students, and exchange club and professional ideas. These objectives are met through a variety of activities taking place throughout the weekend conference.

Today the University of Minnesota, Crookston delivers 26 bachelor's degree programs, 18 minors, and 36 concentrations, including 10 online degrees, in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of 1,600 undergraduates from 25 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

In the photos:
Top right:

U of M, Crookston horticulture students with Sue Jacobson, horticultureinstructor (in purple): Standing left to right: Michael Laurich, Alisha Aasness,Catlin Kersting, Chad Harrer, Mitch Sledge, Kristine Neu and Chancellor CharlesH. Casey. In the front (left to right): Ashlynn Hartung and AmandaThompson.

Middle, left: The entire Mid-America Collegiate Horticultural Society crossing the headwaters of the Mississippi River on Saturday, October 22, 2011.

Bottom right: Four generations of MACHS chairpersons (l to r): Joel Sehloff, 2013 chair, University of Wisconsin- River Falls; Sarah Custer, 2012 chair, South Dakota State University; Kristine Neu, 2011 chair, U of M, Crookston; Winston Beck, 2010 chair, Iowa State University

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